

**Case 3572****PSITTACULINAE Vigors, 1825 (Aves): proposed conservation of usage**

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**Abstract.** The purpose of this application, under Articles 78.1 and 80.2.2 of the Code, is to conserve current usage of the family-group name PSITTACULINAE Vigors, 1825 as valid for the Indo-Australasian long-tailed parrots. This would be effected by designation of the generic name *Psittacula* Cuvier, 1800 as its type genus. Suppression of the junior homonym *Psittacula* Kuhl, 1820, upon which PSITTACULINAE Vigors was originally based, will maintain stability in nomenclature. Suppression of the simultaneously published family-group name PALAEORNITHINAE Vigors, 1825, which was originally applied to the Indo-Australasian long-tailed parrots, is desirable as well.

**Keywords.** Nomenclature; taxonomy; Aves; PSITTACULINAE; *Psittacula*; PALAEORNITHINAE; *Palaeornis*; parrots; Africa; Asia; Indonesia; Australasia.

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1. The long-tailed, often coral-billed parrots of tropical Africa, southern Asia, Indonesia and Australasia comprise ca. 38 extant species (Dickinson, 2003, pp. 190–194) in a monophyletic assemblage of genera comprising *Psittacula* Cuvier, 1800, *Prioniturus* Wagler, 1832, *Psittinus* Blyth, 1842, *Tanygnathus* Wagler, 1842, *Geoffroyus* Bonaparte, 1850, *Eclectus* Wagler, 1832, *Alisterus* Mathews, 1911, *Aprosmictus* Gould, 1843 and *Polytelis* Wagler, 1832 (Smith, 1975, p. 43; Homberger, 1980, pp. 172–179, 184; Wright et al., 2008, p. 2148; Schweizer et al., 2010, p. 988). Whether at subfamily or tribal rank, this group has been known almost universally for over 50 years in mainstream ornithological literature and media by the family-group name PSITTACULINAE Vigors, 1825 (Verheyen, 1956; Smith, 1975; Wolters, 1975; Forshaw, 1978, 1981, 1989, 2002; Homberger, 1980, 2002; Campbell & Lack, 1985; Bock, 1994; Collar, 1997; Schodde, 1997; Higgins, 1999; Dickinson, 2003; de Kloet & de Kloet, 2005; Christidis & Boles, 2008; Mayr, 2008, 2010; Wright et al., 2008; Schweizer et al., 2010 and *Wikipedia*, 2011). The one exception known to us is Condon's (1975, p. 181) use of PALAEORNITHINAE Vigors, 1825 – see below.

2. Vigors (1825a, p. 400) introduced the subfamily PSITTACULINAE by indication (Article 12.2.4) in the spelling PSITTACULINA, and based it expressly and exclusively on *Psittacula* Kuhl (1820, pp. 8 – 9). Kuhl's (l.c.) *Psittacula* comprised 27 species of small, short-tailed parrots of the global tropics, including such diverse groups as the South American parrotlets (*Forpus* Boie, 1858), African lovebirds (*Agapornis* Selby, 1836) and southeast Asian hanging-parrots (*Loriculus* Blyth, 1850); no type species was designated. Excluded altogether were the larger Afro-Asian long-tailed parrots known today as *Psittacula*, together with their allied Indo-Australasian genera. That Vigors (1825a) intentionally kept the long-tails out of his PSITTACULINAE is clear because in the very paper in which he published PSITTACULINAE he placed the long-tails instead in a separate new subfamily, PALAEORNITHINAE (as PALAEORNINA, here corrected under Article 32.5.3.1). That name is also available by indication (Article 12.2.4). The type species of the type genus, *Palaeornis* Vigors, 1825, is *Psittacus alexandri* Linnaeus, 1758 (p. 97), by original designation (Vigors, 1825b, p. 46).

3. On through the 19th century, mainstream ornithological literature (Spix, 1824; Wagler, 1832; Swainson, 1837; Gray 1840, 1845; Finsch, 1868; Reichenow, 1881; Salvadori, 1891) continued to apply *Psittacula* to small, short-tailed parrots, focussing on the tropical American parrotlets. It also attributed the name variously to Brisson (1760, vol. 4, p. 384), Cuvier (unreferenced), Illiger (1811, p. 200) and Kuhl (1820, p. 8). Yet applications of *Psittacula* varied among these last four authors. That of Brisson is unavailable for zoological nomenclature (Opinion 37, Opinions Rendered by the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature, Smithsonian Miscellaneous Publications 2013: 87–88, 1911; Direction 16, Opinions and Declarations 1(C): 81–88, 1955; Direction 105, BZN 20: 343–344, October 1963). That of Illiger, which attributed *Psittacula* to Cuvier (unreferenced), lacked a description, treated the name as a junior synonym of *Psittacus* Linnaeus, 1758, and did not associate any species directly with it. That of Kuhl, which treated *Psittacula* as a separate section of *Psittacus* Linnaeus, 1758, may be regarded as an independent, new name because Kuhl made no direct or unambiguous reference to any earlier usage. Only he, moreover, provided a generic description and unambiguous citation of all species that he included in *Psittacula*. One of these, the tropical American parrotlet *Psittacus passerinus* Linnaeus, 1758 (= *Forpus passerinus* (Linnaeus, 1758)), was subsequently designated as its type species by G.R. Gray (1840, p. 53) who there attributed authorship of *Psittacula* to Kuhl alone by express reference.

4. Mathews (1917, p. 169) found that, as a name, *Psittacula* had been published earlier by Cuvier in 1800 on table 2, volume 1 of his *Leçons d'Anatomie Comparée*. It is available there under Opinion 39 (Opinions Rendered by the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature, Smithsonian Miscellaneous Publications 2060: 91, 1912) and Direction 32 (Opinions and Declarations 1(C): 307–328, 1956). This Opinion makes available Latin names in the tables of volume 1 of the *Leçons* where they are identifiable, via French names, from specified references. The first listed of these specified references was Cuvier's own *Tableau élémentaire d'Histoire Naturelle* (1797). Contrary to Mathews (1917, p. 169), *Psittacula* Cuvier is not made available by reference to *Psittacus alexandri* (= *Psittacus alexandri* Linnaeus, 1758) and *P. rufirostris* (= *Psittacus krameri* Scopoli, 1769) in the *Leçons*, but by reference, through the French name “Perruches” used for *Psittacula* in the *Leçons*,

to those same nominal specific names in Cuvier's *Tableau* (pp. 237–238), cf. Article 12.2.5 of the Code. G.M. Mathews, 1925. *The Birds of Australia. Supplements 4 & 5. Bibliography of the Birds of Australia Pts 1 & 2.* vii, 149 pp. H.F. & G. Witherby, London. records on p. 30 that Cuvier's *Tableau elementaire* dated An. 6 was reviewed on (i.e. issued by) 24 December 1797, and that the *Lecons* dated 1800 (vols. 1 & 2) was reviewed on 19 April 1800. Mathews (1917) went on to confirm the application of *Psittacula* by designating the originally included *Psittacus alexandri* Linnaeus, 1758, as its type species, thereby making *Psittacula* Cuvier, 1800 a senior objective synonym of *Palaeornis* Vigors, 1825 (for which see para. 2 above).

5. Although Mathews's (1917, p. 169) action switched *Psittacula* from stubby-tailed American parrots to long-tailed species in Afro-Asia, and displaced *Palaeornis* Vigors, which had been used for the latter for over 90 years, it was accepted by Peters (1937, p. 241) and, henceforth, by the rest of ornithology to this day. Along with it, the family-group name PSITTACULINAE Vigors was also switched to the Indo-Australasian long-tails (see para. 1 above), in the belief that its type genus was *Psittacula* Cuvier, 1800, not *Psittacula* Kuhl, 1820 (e.g. Bock 1994, p. 140). This shift, together with Bock's (1994) choice of PSITTACULINAE over PALAEORNITHINAE as first reviser (Article 24.2.2), displaced PALAEORNITHINAE Vigors as well.

6. The issue of the type genus of PSITTACULINAE Vigors falls under the jurisdiction of Article 65.2 of the Code. As matters presently stand, this in-use name is invalid because it is based on *Psittacula* Kuhl, 1820, a junior homonym of *Psittacula* Cuvier, 1800 (Article 39 of the Code). In its place, moreover, PALAEORNITHINAE Vigors is available and valid as the next senior family-group name for the Indo-Australasian long-tailed parrots despite Bock's (1944) First Reviser action. Yet reviving PALAEORNITHINAE for these parrots would, we believe, upset stability in nomenclature because it would mean more name shifting and would engender ongoing uncertainty about names drawn from *Psittacula* Cuvier and *Palaeornis* Vigors. So, we refer the case to the Commission to maintain PSITTACULINAE and *Psittacula* in their present usage.

7. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:

- (1) to use its plenary power:
  - (a) to conserve usage of the family-group name PSITTACULINAE Vigors, 1825 by ruling that its type genus is *Psittacula* Cuvier, 1800;
  - (b) to suppress the family-group name PALAEORNITHINAE Vigors, 1825 for the purposes of the Principle of Priority but not for those of the Principle of Homonymy;
- (2) to place on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology the name *Psittacula* Cuvier, 1800 (gender: feminine), type species *Psittacus alexandri* Linnaeus, 1758, by subsequent designation of Mathews (1917), type genus of the family-group name PSITTACULINAE, as ruled in (1)(a) above;
- (3) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the name *alexandri* Linnaeus, 1758, as published in the binomen *Psittacus alexandri* Linnaeus, 1758, specific name of the type species of *Psittacula* Cuvier, 1800;
- (4) to place on the Official List of Family-Group Names in Zoology the name PSITTACULINAE Vigors, 1825, type genus *Psittacula* Cuvier, 1800, as ruled in (1)(a) above;

- (5) to place on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Family-Group Names in Zoology the name PALAEORNITHINAE Vigors, 1825, junior objective synonym of PSITTACULINAE Vigors, 1825, by the First Reviser action of Bock (1994), as suppressed in (1)(b) above.

### Acknowledgements

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